

**Thomas County – Literacy and Life Skills**  
**Community Improvement Strategy:**

**Thomas County seeks to improve educational attainment and literacy for all its citizens, by focusing on increasing the number of GED recipients, increasing literacy and exposing the community to important life skills.**

**Issues to be Addressed**

With unemployment at 9.2% and with 18.9% of the Thomas County living below the poverty level, Thomas County sees the need to better educate its citizens. Although the high school graduation rate is 70.6%, according to the 2000 census data, 26.5% of the population of the county (ages 25+) does not have a high school diploma or equivalent. Thomas County believes that if its population is better educated, it will be able to offer a more attractive workforce to entice industry to locate in Thomas County, enhancing overall economic development. In addition, Thomas County believes that exposing its citizens to valuable life skills will also make its workforce more attractive to potential industry.

**Strategy**

As a Community of Opportunity, Thomas County will accomplish the following over the next two years:

1. Hold Community Literacy Fair.
2. Increase community awareness of the importance of reading and literacy.
3. Recruit volunteer mentors to serve at the local Boys and Girls Club and The Community Resource Center's after-school literacy programs.
4. Increase the number of GED recipients by funding GED tests for 30 citizens.
5. Increase community awareness of the importance of a high school diploma.
6. Deliver life skills workshops and the 40 Developmental Assets curriculum throughout the county.

**Measures of Success**

For each strategy listed above, success will be measured at the end of 2 years as follows:

1. Thomas County will increase the percentage of adults in Thomas County who have their high school diploma or GED from 73.6% to 78% by 2011.
2. Thomas County will expose 250 residents to life skills lessons.

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

| <b>Issue Addressed</b>              | <b>Action Item</b>   | <b>Responsible Local Partners</b>   | <b>Responsible State Partners</b>   | <b>Cost Estimate</b> | <b>Possible Funding Sources</b>                                | <b>Starting and ending dates for completion of action item</b> |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|----------------------|--|--|
| Increase Literacy within the county | Hold Community Literacy/Resource Fair and offer free materials to the public                   | Nancy Tillinghast and Kathy Megahee, Certified Literate Community Committee | n/a   | \$2800               | Co-Op Funds  | April 2010 and April 2011                                      |
| Increase Literacy within the county | Fund 30 GED tests  | Dale Aldridge   | Southwest Georgia Technical College   | 30 x \$95 = \$2850   | Community of Opportunity Grant, city and county matching funds | By May 2011  |
| Increase Literacy within the county | Encourage local businesses to offer their employees the benefit of funding their GED tests     | Dale Aldridge   | Southwest Georgia Technical College, Thomas County Chamber of Commerce, Thomasville Main Street | n/a                  | n/a  | On-going   |
| Increase Literacy within the county | Recruit mentors to assist after-school kids with literacy skills                               | Nancy Tillinghast, Boys and Girls Club, The Community Resources Center      | n/a   | n/a                  | n/a  | May 2010 – July 2010   |
| Increase Literacy within the county | Evaluate students within the after-school program to determine the effect of volunteer mentors | Nancy Tillinghast, Boys and Girls Club, The Community Resources Center      | n/a   | n/a                  | n/a  | August 2010 and May 2011                                       |
| Increase Literacy within the county | Promote the importance of literacy and literacy statistics in local                            | Nancy Tillinghast, local T.V., radio and newspapers                         | Georgia Office of Adult Literacy  | n/a                  | n/a  | On-going   |

|                                 |  |   |                               |                   |   |                           |
|---------------------------------|--|---|-------------------------------|-------------------|---|---------------------------|
|                                 | media outlets  |   |                               |                   |   |                           |
| Expose community to life skills | Determine what population will be targeted for the 40 Developmental Assets Program   | Kathy Megahee, Family Connection, Kha McDonald, City of Thomasville, Mike Stephenson, Thomas County BOC | Family Connection Partnership | n/a               | n/a   | January 2010              |
| Expose community to life skills | Train 10 trainers to deliver the 40 Developmental Assets program   | Kathy Megahee, Family Connection  | Family Connection Partnership | 10 X \$35 = \$350 | Cleve Bostick Memorial Foundation and Co-Op Funds | March 2010                |
| Expose community to life skills | Purchase materials needed for the trainers to be able to deliver the 40 Developmental Assets program to the community                                  | Kathy Megahee, Family Connection  | Family Connection Partnership | \$1500            | Co-Op Funds                                       | April 2010                |
| Expose community to life skills | Have trainers deliver the 40 Developmental Assets program to three targeted audience   | Kathy Megahee, Family Connection  | n/a                           | n/a               | n/a   | June 2010 – December 2010 |
| Expose community to life skills | Ensure that graduation coaches are working hard to ensure students do not drop out. However, if students do decide to dropout, have graduation coaches | Dale Aldridge, Karen Jones, Verna Wiggins, Moses Everett  | n/a                           | n/a               | n/a   | ongoing                   |

|                                 |   |   |                                     |     |     |                            |
|---------------------------------|---|---|-------------------------------------|-----|-----|----------------------------|
|                                 | encourage the students to get GED at SWGA Technical College   |   |                                     |     |     |                            |
| Expose community to life skills | Promote Lunch and Learn program at Southwest Georgia Technical School to GED students and all students enrolled at community college  | Dr. Glenn Deibert, local media outlets (radio, tv, newspaper)                                 | n/a                                 | n/a | n/a | Quarterly in 2010 and 2011 |
| Expose community to life skills | Coordinate existing community programs (Financial Fitness, 40 Developmental Assets, Homeownership, Dress for Success) with the existing Lunch and Learn program that is in place at Southwest Georgia Technical College | Dr. Glenn Deibert, Graham Bell, Redemption Ministries, Inc., Kathy Megahee, Family Connection | Southwest Georgia Technical College | n/a | n/a | Quarterly in 2010 and 2011 |

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, the parties hereto Agree to adopt the Thomas County Community Improvement Strategy.

FOR THE RECIPIENT

FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair, County

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Program Coordinator

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor, City